Is there a Structural Break in Women's Paid-Unpaid Time Use in the U.S. Health and Education Labor Market?

Abstract:

Is there a Structural Break in Women's Paid-Unpaid Time Use in the U.S. Health and Education Labor Market? Study used micro-data from the ATUS covering 2003-24 and restricted the sample to Health and Education sector. Contrary to expectations of convergence within this sector, women work fewer market hours (<5 hours weekly) as well as less leisure time than men, even within the female intensive labor market in US. Implying, women are still busy with the home production (>8 hours weekly). This time distribution persists even in the prime-age regression.

Employment status plays a key role in explaining these differences. The interaction term of female and full-time employment status, spend significantly less time on home production whereas part-time employed women devote more time to unpaid work. This suggests that women labor force participation in US meaning engaged in the part-time job status. By decomposing the detailed reason, analysis reveals that family obligations and childcare responsibilities are the primary reasons underlying women's part-time status.

To see the structural break of women's transformation, using the evidence from BLS-IPUMS showing a rise in female labor force participation since the second quarter of 2019, the sample divided into two periods 2003–2019 and 2020–2024. Period-specific estimates suggest a recent break, women's market hours started increasing while home production hours declining in the post-2020 period, indicating US female labor force are in the early stages of a structural break.

Key words: Economics of Gender, Time Allocation and Labor Supply, Labor Force and Employment, Home Production, and Structural Break.